

Public Advocate Mark Green, who both challenged Mr. Schumer in the Democratic primary; New York State Assemblyman Roberto Ramirez;

murder victim Matthew Shepard; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks in New York City on the Situation in Kosovo

October 12, 1998

Good evening. In recent weeks, faced with a deepening and dangerous crisis in Kosovo, the United States has worked to stop the violence and repression and put the people of Kosovo on the path to peace.

Last month the United Nations Security Council, through Resolution 1199, demanded that President Milosevic implement a cease-fire, withdraw the forces he has recently sent to Kosovo and garrison the rest, allow refugees to return to their villages, give immediate access to humanitarian relief agencies, and agree to a timetable for autonomy negotiations with the Kosovar Albanians.

President Milosevic has not yet complied with the international community's demands. Given his intransigence, the 16 members of NATO have just voted to give our military commanders the authority to carry out airstrikes against Serbia. This is only the second time in NATO's history that it has authorized the use of force—and the first time in the case of a country brutally repressing its own people.

The international community is now prepared to act. But as I have said from the beginning, we would prefer to resolve this crisis peacefully, rather than through military action. That is why I sent Ambassador Richard Holbrooke on a mission to make it clear to President Milosevic what the world expects him to do to avert the NATO airstrikes.

Ambassador Holbrooke has reported to me, and in the past few hours to NATO, that, faced with a solid international front, President Milosevic has made a series of commitments. If fully implemented—and that is a critical and very big “if”—these commitments could achieve the international community's objectives as stated in the United Nations resolution.

In light of President Milosevic's pledges and the independent verification system that will be established, NATO has agreed to delay action for 96 hours.

President Milosevic has agreed, first, to fully comply with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1199. Second, he has accepted an intrusive international inspection to verify compliance. Third, he has agreed to a timetable for completing interim autonomy arrangements with the Kosovar Albanians.

If these commitments are met, and the international community will be able to see for itself whether they are met, they could provide the basis for peace and progress.

All along our objectives have been clear: to end the violence in Kosovo which threatens to spill over into neighboring countries and to spark instability in the heart of Europe; to reverse a humanitarian catastrophe in the making as tens of thousands of homeless refugees risk freezing or starving to death in the winter; and to seek a negotiated peace.

But let me be very clear: Commitments are not compliance. Balkan graveyards are filled with President Milosevic's broken promises. In the days ahead, we will focus not only on what President Milosevic says but on what we see that he does, through a robust on-the-ground and in-the-air verification system.

I hope that the commitments President Milosevic has made can create a peaceful way forward. That has been our preference all along. But together with our NATO partners, we will determine whether President Milosevic follows words with deeds. And we will remain ready to take military action if Mr. Milosevic fails to make good on his commitments this time.

As we approach the next century, we must never forget one of the most indelible lessons of this one we're about to leave, that America has a direct stake in keeping the peace in Europe before isolated acts of violence turn into large-scale wars. Today determined diplomacy backed by force is creating the path to peace.

I want to thank Mr. Holbrooke; I want to thank Secretary General Solana and our NATO

Allies for all the contributions they have made. Now we must and we will do what is necessary to see that that path to peace is followed.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. at the New York Hilton and Towers. In his remarks, he

referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke, the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the U.N.; and NATO Secretary General Javier Solana.

Remarks at a G&P Charitable Foundation for Cancer Research Dinner in New York City

October 12, 1998

The President. Thank you. Well, when I told Denise I would do this for her and the memory of her daughter, I didn't know that an added bonus was I would be introduced by Bill Cosby, a man who—I mean, his net worth was 500 times mine before I met all those lawyers in Washington. [Laughter] But I thank you, Bill. I thank you and Camille for your friendship, the letters you sent me, the words of wisdom in the last several months, and for being here tonight.

I want to thank my wonderful friend Denise Rich for so many things, but for remembering her daughter in this magnificent and farsighted and humane way. Hillary would like to have been here with me tonight, but she is in Prague on a trip for our country. But we love you, Denise, and we thank you for what you're doing.

I want to thank Les Moonves for his work in making this evening a success. And I want to say I am delighted that you're honoring Milton Berle. Thank you. [Applause] Thank you.

You know, when you're President, you can speak off the cuff a little bit, but you have all these wonderful people who work for you, and they dig up interesting facts. Now, here are the facts they dug up for me to say about Milton Berle. [Laughter]

[At this point, Mr. Berle stood up and pretended to depart.]

The President. Oh, no, it gets better; sit down. He's been in show business for 85 years. He's performed in drag more than any other entertainer except the roadshow cast of "La Cage Aux Folles." [Laughter] And most important, he holds the Guinness Book of World Records for

the most charity benefit performances of any entertainer in history. Thank you, Milton Berle.

I'd like to ask you to take just a couple of minutes to seriously consider the purpose for which you have come tonight. Twenty-five years ago, America declared war on cancer. Twenty-five years from now, I hope we will have won the war. I hope the war on cancer will have about as much meaning to schoolchildren as the War of 1812. Twenty-five years from now, I hope schoolchildren don't even know what the word "chemotherapy" means.

The progress now being made against cancer is stunning. We are closing in on the genetic causes of breast cancer, colon cancer, and prostate cancer; testing medicines actually to prevent these cancers. New tools for screening and diagnosis are returning to many patients the promise of a long and healthy life. From 1991 to 1995 cancer death rates actually dropped for the first time in history.

For the last 6 years, we have worked hard to fight this dreaded disease, helping cancer patients to keep their health coverage when they change jobs, accelerating the approval of cancer drugs while maintaining safe standards, continually every year increasing funding for cancer research.

In the last few weeks, four critical steps have been taken. First of all, in spite of all the fights we've been having in Washington, we did succeed in getting from Congress on a bipartisan basis the largest single increase in funding for cancer and other medical research in history, as part of our gift to the 21st century. Second, I directed the National Cancer Institute to expedite a new computer system to give tens of thousands of cancer patients across our country